1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 brides, yet in the census of Bastar they were recorded as Murias.

000 Bhamragarh village itself had few Maria residents. Celebrated though it is as a beauty spot, to my mind the junction of the three rivers there can only be appreciated in its full beauty from the Bastar shore or, better still, from midstream, as I saw it first in 1927. This time we stayed in a forest rest-house on the Indrawati bank, and the Zamindar who had motored out to join me talked under the moon till late at night on tribal problems.

164 Yaws has long been a scourge of the Marias, in Chanda as in Bastar, but whereas the campaigns against yaws, begun when I was
● 744 in Bastar and carried on with unremitting energy ever since by Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, have now almost eradicated the disease in Bastar save for fresh infection from contacts with Chanda Marias or Hyderabad Gonds and Koyas, in Chanda it is still very rife. Bhamragarh gave us an example typical of the difficulties which may beset schemes for helping the aboriginal in the absence of constant supervision of local minor officials. In 1936 the Government had opened a dispensary at Bhamragarh, primarily with the idea that it would become a centre for yaws treatment. Mr. Kerawala visiting Bhamragarh just before my tour, finding that hardly any yaws or other patients attended the dispensary, inquired why, and was told that the Assistant Medical Officer posted there was demanding a fowl and eggs from every Maria as a fee for each injection. His plea was that he had extreme difficulty in getting supplies, so that unless he could 'live on' the Marias he often had to go back by cart the 38 miles of forest track to Allapilli to get supplies, which meant closing the dispensary for nearly a week at a time. One of many things into which I was looking during this tour was the progress in Chanda of the first year of an anti-yaws campaign financed from a Government of India grant. Before that campaign began such anti-yaws work as had been attempted had been haphazard and unplanned, and nothing had been done to ensure that each patient took the full number of injections needed for a permanent cure. At all my camps in the Marias country patients streamed in for treatment, and as the Sub-assistant Health Officer deputed to accompany me for yaws work travelled in my lorry and had to stop in every village on our way to treat yaws patients, our arrival in camp was generally long after dark. The incidence of yaws seemed far greater than the Public Health Department had imagined. We had cases, as I have said, at every camp, perhaps especially among the Hill Marias at Kuvakodi, in Lahiri, and in all the villages between Pirmeli and Surjagarh, and thence on into Aundhi zamindari in Drug district;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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Bison Horn Maria

Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog"'.[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides, through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *katwa*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohwa*, *sa* or *gougool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.